

## First Call's Weekly Announcements – January 22, 2010

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We welcome your comments, suggestions and any research or event information you wish to have shared with the First Call network. Please let us know what's going on in your community so we can help spread the word!

Please visit our web site at [www.firstcallbc.org](http://www.firstcallbc.org) for further details on upcoming First Call meetings, events, new publications and more.

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## Advocacy/Calls to Action

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### 1. Living Wage Forum in New Westminster

Did you know that New Westminster City Council is considering becoming the first city in Canada to pass a Living Wage By-Law?

Come out and hear about:

- What a living wage is and is not
- How and why the Royal City should pass a Living Wage By-law
- Testimonials from real people who live on low wages & local businesses that pay a living wage

Guests include:

- Seth Klein – Director of the BC Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Michael McCarthy Flynn – From Living Wage for Families Campaign
- Jamie McEvoy – New West City Councillor

The forum takes place Tuesday, February 9th at 6:30 PM, at the offices of UFCW 1518, 350 Columbia St. in New Westminster. For more information call BC ACORN 604 522 8706 or [bcacornva@acorncanada.org](mailto:bcacornva@acorncanada.org). Brought to you by BC ACORN and the Living Wage for Families Campaign and its 36 partners.

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## 2. Call to MP's to Move on Resolution to End Child Poverty

[Campaign 2000](#) recently wrote to all Members of Parliament asking them to take action on the November 24, 2009 resolution that passed in the House of Commons to develop an immediate plan to end poverty in Canada. We encourage you to also contact your MP and urge them to stay focused on this issue. A sample letter is available [here](#), and you can look up your MP [here](#).

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## 3. A Child-Centered Approach to Complaint Resolution

BC's Representative for Children and Youth and the Ombudsperson have issued a joint report titled *Hearing the Voices of Children and Youth: A Child-Centered Approach to Complaint Resolution*. The review offers a number of opportunities for improvements to the Ministry of Children and Family Development's regional complaint resolution process for children who are in care or receiving government services. The recommendations address timeliness, fair and transparent administration, accessibility, consistency, a province-wide complaint tracking system, quality assurance, and accountability.

The report states that children need to know that they can complain about services. They should start by contacting the ministry, and if they're not sure who to talk to or how to proceed they can contact the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth ([www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca)). If they complain and are unhappy with the process or responses they receive they can contact the Office of the Ombudsperson ([www.ombudsman.bc.ca](http://www.ombudsman.bc.ca)).

The report is available for download [here](#). It was released with an accompanying youth-focused [video](#) highlighting their right to complain if they feel they are being treated unfairly.

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#### 4. Prince Rupert Declared a Child Friendly City, Advocate Plans Walk for Education

Prince Rupert was proclaimed a child friendly city this past October. A dinner was held earlier this week to celebrate that announcement, but according to the Prince Rupert Daily News, Mayor Jack Mussallem said that the city is unable to financially contribute to any childhood education programs, but will take action on the child friendly initiative where possible.

At the dinner, it was also announced that local teacher Tulani Ackerman will walk and bike from Vancouver to Prince Rupert beginning on April 20 of this year to raise awareness about educational issues in Prince Rupert and urge government to take action.

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#### 5. Right to Play Coming to Vancouver Olympics, but not Athletes' Village

[Right to Play](#) is an international organization that works to improve the lives of children in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world by using the power of sport and play for development, health and peace. Right to Play is supported by athletes and has had a pavilion in the athletes' village at the past seven Olympic games. This year, however, the group was informed that they will not be allowed to set up in the Olympic village because Mitsubishi, one of their main sponsors, is in competition with Olympic sponsor General Motors.

Regardless, the organization will set up a pavilion in Vancouver during the Olympics, where children and families can learn some of the games taught to disadvantaged kids. The pavilion will be located on Pacific Boulevard near GM Place (Canada Hockey Place).

Read more about Right to Play in the [Globe and Mail](#).

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## Research & Resources

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## 1. BCACL Grants for Projects by People with Developmental Disabilities

BCACL is now accepting applications from self advocates or self advocacy groups for funding from the Self Advocates Seeding Innovation Project to do innovative work in their communities. Youth or youth groups are encouraged to apply.

Grants are available for up to \$5000. Visit [www.bcacl.org/sasi](http://www.bcacl.org/sasi) for the application form and for more information. The deadline for applications is January 29, 2010.

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## 2. BC Aboriginal Child Care Society Publications on Cultural Safety

[\*Steps in the Right Direction: Connecting & Collaborating in Early Intervention Therapy with Aboriginal Families & Communities in British Columbia\*](#) was developed for occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech language pathologists who provide early intervention therapy services to Aboriginal children, families and communities in BC to support interdisciplinary therapy professionals in designing and delivering early intervention programs in Aboriginal communities that are meaningful, effective and culturally safe. This information is also relevant to other early intervention disciplines, such as infant development programs and supported child development programs.

[\*A Guide For Culturally-Focused Early Intervention Therapy Programs For Aboriginal Children & Families In British Columbia\*](#) was developed for Aboriginal communities interested in early childhood development and in programs that promote healthy children, families and communities. The purpose of this guide is to provide Aboriginal communities with information about early intervention therapy so that they can:

- Help families access early intervention therapy services.
- Advocate for funding for early intervention therapy services.
- Partner with early intervention therapists.

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## 3. HELP Study on Impacts of Neighbourhood Poverty

The level of poverty in the neighbourhood that children live in during kindergarten has been found to predict their reading level in grade 7. A study of urban children in BC showed that those who lived in neighbourhoods with a higher socioeconomic status during kindergarten scored better on the foundation skills assessment test in grade 7 than children who came from poorer neighbourhoods, regardless of where they lived in grade 7. Read more about it on the [UBC website](#).

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## 4. City of Ottawa Develops Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Steering Committee of Ottawa has developed a poverty reduction strategy for the City to coincide with Ontario's provincial strategy. Public forums and initiatives informed the 3 strategic priorities and 16 recommendations in this plan. \$3.5 million is required to implement the plan, and funding for the first year will come from one time provincial funds to the City's Community and Social Services Department.

The strategic priorities are 1. a service system working to the benefit of the people in need, with recommendations including a single point of application for multiple City services of importance to people on low income; 2. building a community of inclusion and belonging, with recommendations including increased access to recreation, increased community use of schools, and advocating for higher social assistance rates; 3. breaking down the myths about poverty and promoting poverty reduction, with recommendations including a public awareness strategy and collaborations with community funders.

Download the report [here](#).

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## Announcements

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### 1. Poverty Olympics Torch Relay Launched

In conjunction with the [2010 Poverty Olympics](#), the Poverty Olympics Torch Relay was launched this past weekend. From the press release:

*Torchbearers across the province will emphasize the devastating reality of poverty and homelessness in their local communities.*

*"BC wins Gold for having the worst poverty rate in the country, the lowest minimum wage, and the highest child poverty rate for the sixth year in a row," declares organizer, Trish Garner. "It is inexcusable that the government refuses to take action."*

*Preceding the "official" Olympic torch relay by a few days, the Poverty Olympics Torch Relay will counter the corporate event with the message that people throughout the province are struggling with poverty...*

*Kicking off in Golden today [Jan 17], the Poverty Olympics Torch Relay will feature Vernon, Kamloops, 100 Mile House, Quesnel, Greenville, Sechelt, Whistler, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Langley, Surrey, New Westminster, Richmond, West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Coquitlam, and Burnaby. Concluding the province-wide*

*journey, the final leg of the Torch Relay will end at the third annual Poverty Olympics in Vancouver on February 7, 2010.*

Details of Poverty Olympics torch relay events happening in your community are available [here](#).

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## 2. Surrey Urban Youth Project Looks at Impacts of the Olympics and Gentrification

Youth and community members want to know how the Olympics are going to impact Surrey. Surrey Urban Youth Project is hosting *What Gives? A Community Event on the Impact of the Olympics and Gentrification in Surrey*, on Sunday, January 31 from 3:00 - 5:00pm at Klah-woy-ya Aboriginal Centre, 13629 108th Ave. Surrey, Coast Salish Territory.

The event will include community dialogue, mural making, and the creation of a Community Video Statement which will be distributed online, to the mainstream media, to civic and provincial government representatives and beyond! The event will also feature performances by local artists.

Lunch and bus tickets provided! For more information and to RSVP contact mia amir, Program Coordinator and Community Advocate, Surrey Urban Youth Project, 604.780.8463 or [mia@suyp.org](mailto:mia@suyp.org).

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## 3. Brain Development and Learning Conference – Early Bird Deadline Jan. 31

January 31 is the early bird registration deadline for the Brain Development and Learning: Making Sense of the Science conference July 16 – 20 in Vancouver. This interdisciplinary conference is devoted to enriching & improving the lives of children by making cutting-edge research in neuroscience & child development available, relevant, & understandable to physicians, other clinicians, educators, parents, & all who care about children. Find out more at [www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/bdl.html](http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/bdl.html).

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